

Written Testimony of  
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Environment Committee  
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**HB 5693, An Act Requiring Notice and Contingency Plans Prior to the State Draw Down  
of Lakes and Ponds**

**SB 363, An Act Requiring the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to  
Conduct a Study of Private Property Owners' Water Rights**

Good day, Senator Kennedy, Representative Albis, Senator Chapin, Representative Shaban and the distinguished members of the Environment Committee. My name is Scott Ramsay. I am the Chair of the Government Relations Committee of the Connecticut Association of Golf Course Superintendents as well as the Superintendent at The Course at Yale. I'm here today to provide comments on **House Bill 5693**, An Act Requiring Notice and Contingency Plans Prior to the State Draw Down of Lakes and Ponds.

Connecticut public and private golf courses are a major benefactor to the State and its water quality. Golf is an important industry in Connecticut providing \$1.1 billion in financial impact, employing 11,750 citizens and \$336 million in total wage income among its 185 small businesses. Golf provides useful and necessary open spaces and recreational opportunities, which adds to the uniqueness of our wonderful state. Golf is also a net provider of water, wetland areas and natural habitats. Golf uses less than 1% of Connecticut's total water usage. There are numerous scientific studies, which prove that when water is tested leaving a golf course, it is cleaner than the water, which entered that golf course. In addition, golf courses throughout the state are relied upon on an annual basis by local, state and national charitable organizations to raise funds for hundreds of worthy causes. Simply put golf is good for the environment, business and the well being of our residents.

The Association of Golf Course Superintendents has a concern with this legislation. We would like to clarify that this legislation wouldn't affect the current Best Management Practices of golf courses, and further regulate golf course activity as it relates to water usage.

Golf courses are designed to collect surface water runoff for necessary irrigation purposes. Many golf courses simply would not survive without this draw down activity. Golf course water features are designed with a purpose, to collect water, store water, irrigate with this water and then repeat. Golf recycles water and is a beneficial buffer in the hydrological cycle. Golf course water is not moved, transported or shipped to another location.

Golf course water use is already highly regulated by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP). Connecticut golf courses currently are operating under some of the strictest regulations in the country, each and every golf course functions under a Permitted or Regulated Diversion. Many of these permits do not allow golf courses to manage their draw down or water levels in a proactive fashion to keep these resources at capacity. HB 5693 has the potential to further complicate a necessary function to golf that is already highly regulated. I appreciate this opportunity to testify on this most important issue to the golf course industry, on behalf of the superintendents we are available to discussion this issue to reach a solution that is sustainable for all.

Finally, I would like to offer a comment on **Senate Bill 363**, which requires DEEP to conduct a study of private property owners' water rights. As noted in my testimony, water is the life blood for golf courses; and as such, any study that determines the water rights of property owners the golf industry takes a great deal of interest. If this legislation moves forward, the golf industry would like to be active participants in this process and study by DEEP. We have worked closely and successfully in the past with DEEP in create a manual for water Best Management Practices. Nationally and in Connecticut, the golf industry takes pride in our leadership role in assisting to craft programs that are congruent with the goals of users, regulatory agencies and environmental groups. Golf is committed to environmental issues and sustainability.

Thank you for your time and I would be glad to answer any questions.